

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 01130 080244Z

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /055 W

----- 082043

R 080150Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4399

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, JA, TW

SUBJECT: ROC PRIVATE CLAIMS AGAINST THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT

1. SINCE FEBRUARY 28 LOCAL PAPERS HAVE GIVEN EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO ALLEGED PRIVATE CLAIMS AGAINST THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT (GOJ) BY TAIWANESE WHO SERVED IN THE JAPANESE ARMY DURING WORLD WAR II. THE PRESS HAS SPECULATED THAT THE AMOUNT INVOLVED MAY TOTAL AS HIGH AS NT\$10 BILLION (US\$270 MILLION); HOWEVER, ONE REPORT SAID THE LOCAL POST OFFICE HAD ACCEPTED REGISTRATION FOR 27,000 CASES IN 1946 WITH CLAIMS TOTALING YEN 45,647,811 AND SINGAPORE DOLLARS 8,343.

2. ALTHOUGH THE SINO-JAPANESE PEACE TREATY STIPULATED THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WOULD SETTLE CLAIMS OF CITIZENS THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS, THE ISSUE WAS REPORTEDLY SHELVED IN THE "OVERALL NATIONAL INTEREST". (ONE PRESS REPORT SUGGESTED THAT THE GOJ HAD ASKED FOR COMPENSATION FOR JAPANESE CITIZENS WHOSE PROPERTY HAD BEEN CONFISCATED IN TAIWAN AFTER WORLD WAR II AS A QUID PRO QUO FOR SETTLING THE CLAIMS).

3. AN ORGANIZATION SEEKING REPAYMENT HAS ALLEGEDLY BEEN IN EXISTENCE SINCE 1972 BUT LESS THAN 100 PEOPLE HAD FILED CLAIMS UNTIL LAST MONTH. EFFORTS TO DEVELOP

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PAGE 02 TAIPEI 01130 080244Z

INTEREST HAD EXPANDED FOLLOWING THE RECOMPENSATION OF

LI KUANG-HUI (A TAIWANESE STRAGGLER WHO WAS RECENTLY FOUND IN INDONESIA). THE ISSUE RECEIVED WIDE-SPREAD PUBLICITY WHEN LEGISLATIVE YUAN MEMBER HUANG SHUN-HSING DURING AN INTERPELLATION SESSION AT THE LEGISLATIVE YUAN URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO HELP THE TAIWANESE INVOLVED.

4. HUANG TUNG-CHI, "CONVENOR" OF THE "PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF THE DELEGATION OF COMPATRIOTS IN THE TAIWAN AREA OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO DEMAND REPAYMENT OF MILITARY POSTAL SAVINGS", HAS PLACED ADS IN LOCAL PAPERS ASKING EVERYONE WITH EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THEIR CLAIM TO REGISTER WITH THE COMMITTEE. THE GROUP THEN PLANS TO PRESENT ITS CLAIM TO THE GOJ THROUGH A LAWYER IN TOKYO.

5. ALTHOUGH FOREIGN MINISTER SHEN CHANG-HUAN REPORTEDLY SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE YUAN THAT THE GROG COULD DO NOTHING TO HELP CLAIMANTS BECAUSE THE GROG AND THE GOJ NO LONGER HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. GOVERNOR HSIEH TUNG-MIN HAS ALLEGEDLY GIVEN AT LEAST VERBAL SUPPORT TO THE GROUP.

8. WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN HINTS IN THE PRESS THAT THE LOCAL GROUP MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY LEGITIMATE (E.G. ALL REGISTRANTS WERE ASKED TO PURCHASE SUBSCRIPTION TO ITS MAGAZINE), THE QUESTION OF CLAIMS HAS RECEIVED WIDESPREAD PLAY IN LOCAL PAPERS. ARTICLES HAVE SOME ANTI-JAPANESE FLAVOR; NOTABLY, THE FAILURE OF GOJ TO PAY CLAIMS IN PAST, THE PAYMENTS ALREADY MADE TO RYUKYUANS AND KOREANS WITH SIMILAR CLAIMS (AT US\$1 AND US\$1.23 TO THE YEN), AND STATEMENTS THAT HALF OF THE TAIWANESE WHO WERE DRAFTED DID NOT RETURN TO TAIWAN, CONTINUED PRESS PLAY ON THIS ISSUE COULD PRODUCE ANOTHER FOCAL POINT FOR ANTI-JAPANESE SENTIMENT IN TAIWAN.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CLAIMS, VETERANS GROUPS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TAIPEI01130
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750082-0012
From: TAIPEI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750368/aaaacjtn.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <16 JUL 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ROC PRIVATE CLAIMS AGAINST THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT
TAGS: PFOR, JA, TW
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006